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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ABUJA 001769

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [KCRM](#) [NI](#)

SUBJECT: NIGERIA: AMBASSADOR MEETS PRIVATELY WITH EFCC  
CHAIRPERSON WAZIRI

Classified By: Ambassador Robin Renee Sanders for reasons  
in Sections 1.4. (B) and (D)

¶1. (C) The Ambassador met with Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) Chairperson Farida Waziri September 24 at the residence to open a new dialogue on the USG's desire for the EFCC to improve its efforts on Nigeria's anti-corruption fight and reiterate U.S. expectations that the EFCC begin to hone a better record of investigations, prosecutions, and convictions. The Ambassador reinforced the Secretary's message during her August 2009 visit that the GON has fallen short in its commitment to fight corruption and that there has been a "reversal" of performance in this area. Waziri expressed gratitude for the opportunity to have a dialogue and agreed to reinvigorate cooperation on anti-corruption. Ambassador stressed that there was no change in U.S. policy toward the EFCC at this time but a willingness to dialogue to push for more improvement on corruption.

¶2. (C) Waziri told the Ambassador that she was "so very pleased" to open a dialogue with the Ambassador, albeit during this informal session. Using the current case against former Delta State Governor James Ibori in the UK as an example, she emphasized that a monumental effort would be needed to cooperate internationally on anti-corruption efforts, as corruption in one country affected the well-being of other countries. When asked about the status of the case against former Delta State Governor James Ibori, Waziri asserted that she asked the London Metropolitan Police, via Nigerian Justice Minister and Attorney General (AG) Michael Aondoakaa, to deliver Ibori accomplice Udoamaka Onuigbo (currently on trial in the UK) to Nigeria where she could be included in the case against him. While she signed an agreement to keep her in custody throughout the trial, she said the UK did not want the EFCC to take custody, but rather the Nigerian courts. She claimed that, even after explaining that the courts would likely still release her on bail, the UK refused. As a result, Waziri explained, Ibori's defense attorneys have accused the EFCC of messing up the process, and the Nigerian court refused to be responsible for custody of the defendant as they said this was not their role.

¶3. (C) On other high-profile cases, Waziri claimed she was doing her best, but could not wage the fight alone. She explained that she had assembled many strong cases against many ex-governors, only to end up with court delays caused by appeals by defense attorneys who insisted on trying them in their clients' Nigerian states of residence, as is the case

with Ibori. (His case will be tried in Asaba, the capital of his home state, Delta State.) She said defendants had not even entered pleas in many cases, including in the Ibori case. Waziri also blamed EFCC bureaucracy, which she described as containing too many outside law enforcement agencies with differing levels of discipline that ultimately diluted EFCC effectiveness. She told the Ambassador that she has been working hard for EFCC autonomy, so that all EFCC staff belonged to and received training from the EFCC. Waziri described her ties with the AG as a "working relationship" within the prescribed legal framework for AG-EFCC cooperation.

14. (C) Waziri told the Ambassador that U.S. support would mean a lot to the EFCC and represent a major step forward in bilateral cooperation to fight corruption. The Ambassador restated and strongly cautioned that this informal meeting should not be misconstrued as official support for her or the EFCC, reminding her that the U.S. expected to see results and a marked change in EFCC performance. However, given that anti-corruption is a key U.S. policy goal for Nigeria and that any Binational Commission between our two countries would focus on and include this issue, having a means to dialogue was important.

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COMMENT  
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15. (C) Waziri conveyed much the same rhetoric she has in the past meetings, assuring us of her commitment to fighting

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corruption, while placing most blame on others for lack of progress. We will continue to monitor EFCC results, as we attempt to build a more constructive relationship and move toward the eventual Binational Commission Working Group that will likely focus on improving Nigeria's abysmal record on corruption. END COMMENT.  
SANDERS